

Stretching

It is important for the competitive tennis athlete to maintain good shoulder flexibility in order to allow for full range of motion which improves stroke potential. The stretching program recommended for the tennis player focuses on stretching the usually tight posterior and inferior joint capsule and increasing shoulder internal rotation. The stretches should be performed 3 times each and held for 45 seconds twice a day. It is also recommended that the stretches be performed before and after playing tennis.

Crossed-arm adduction for posterior capsule

Starting Position

Lift arm out in front of you to shoulder height with elbow bent at 90 degrees.



Stretch Position

Using your other arm, pull the elbow across your body.



Internal rotation and stretch of the external rotators

Starting Position

Place hand in the small of your back with your palm facing out.



Stretch Position

Holding a tennis racquet, pull your arm up your back.



Inferior capsule stretch

Starting Position

Lift your arm overhead with your elbow pointing to the ceiling.



Stretch Position

Holding a tennis racket, pull your arm towards the ground.



Overhead athletes often have a stretched anterior capsule and therefore it may not be advisable for tennis players to perform aggressive stretches in an abducted and externally rotated position. This stretch may be harmful because it may be exacerbating a subtle anterior instability.